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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly outlines Italian pedagogical research on youth since World War II and presents the sociological interaction of youth to family, friends, work, and current issues. A 1987 survey is reviewed with youth responses given in percentages and ranked according to the importance of family, work, friends, leisure activities, studies and cultural interests, sports, social commitments, religious commitments, and political activity. Youth responses to family, friends, and work are discussed in detail while disaffection for politics, human rights, and international justice, and other controversial issues are examined because Italian youth expressed their powerlessness to change these situations. Prior to the International Year of Youth (1985), Italian schools had not differentiated youth from students. Today, the Italian Ministry for the Family and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, along with local governments and public institutions, have created programs to study youth and to provide services to them. A 24-item bibliography of Italian sources is included. (DJC)

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SOCIAL AND CIVIC VALUES OF YOUNG ITALIANS
AND THE EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF THE FAMILY,
THE SCHOOL, LOCAL BODIES, ASSOCIATIONS AND
THE WORKING WORLD

by

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Introduction

The first problem is of a methodological nature. The Conference brochure refers to the "effects of the family, the school on the civic and social values". The study prospects are attractive but do not correspond to a consolidated research tradition in Italy. Only in the last few years have there been signs of change towards interdisciplinary research which leads not only to an objective representation of "who young people are and what they are like" but also "why they are so" and "what political and educational action has effected these changes in those to whom it was directed."

Until now the problem has been dealt using a sector by sector approach which has had the merit of highlighting the different aspects of the world of youth but which hardly satisfies either researchers or those operating in the world of education, politics or justice. The title of this paper, therefore, is limited to the presentation of youth values and the educational tasks of some agencies but does no analysis of the "effects" mentioned in the leaflet.

I shall refer in particular to the two most obvious ways of approaching the issue: the first is pedagogical and the second is sociological.

Social pedagogy and the educational system

Like all human sciences, pedagogy is involved in both the *micro* aspect (in our case the educational relationship) and the *macro* aspect (in our case the whole society as an educator). This is how "social pedagogy" is viewed and defined.

To implement some of the fascinating but rather general ideas which the UNESCO Faure Report (1970) called the "educating society" and "permanent education", school theories were worked out in relation to the so-called "extra-scholastic", "modal" theories of education, theories of the "extended educational system" and prospects for the *integration* the various agencies or *educational agencies*.

The main "agencies" are the family, the school, mass media, the church, associations of which young people are members and local bodies. Different experts attribute different weight to each of these bodies in a framework of a never-very-clearly-defined educational *division of labour* and in a context in which the "educational market" is increasingly rich and aggressive, and includes a whole system which miseducates, operating within civil society.

The family is entrusted chiefly with educational responsibility for the ethical-affective sphere, the school with the cognitive sphere, the churches with the ethical-religious sphere, associations with the creative and socialization spheres, the mass media with information and entertainment and local

bodies with information and acculturation or facilities and promotion.

Confusion and separation must be avoided. The different bodies, each with its own area of specialization in this common responsibility, should form an *alliance* and ensure a certain dovetailing and overlapping so they can enrich each other and receive enrichment without perverting the nature of the other.

In this scenario, the school occupies a central position. To begin with, its influence is far-reaching because of its territorial extension and its centralized apparatus, and then its tradition and its methods are solid, and the majority of students feel contented with what it offers. Even the sharp criticism to which it is subject it is not such as to delegitimize the institution, either in theory or in practice. The debate on the abolition of schools helped strengthen the idea that the school system was necessary and should improve its productivity in terms of "excellence and support" and that it required better organization in the sense that the Ministry should grant greater autonomy to the individual scholastic units and introduce more dynamic central coordination.

While the optimism of the sixties and the enthusiasm of the early years of the seventies have vanished, much credit is given to the idea that school can and must be regenerated in contact with the concrete problems which represent the educational needs of the students and include the very relevant one of providing training for an occupation.

Civic Education and its implications

The social and civic education of young people is being viewed against the backdrop, very briefly outlined here.

At this point it is worth recalling the fruit of a long pedagogical study on education in social and civic values which is the theme of this encounter. With the breath of fresh air the Washburne Commission brought at the time of the Resistance and the Italian Republican Commission which went into effect forty years ago the nationalistic rhetoric of the twenty years of Fascism was wiped out and the concepts which had inspired the *Faideia* of the Italian "Risorgimento" thrived again in new soil. The distinctions between civic education and other aspects of personal and social life and their implications, gradually became clear. It also became clear that the new society of which the Constitution was architect could not flourish if the the ethical, social, sociable, civil, civic, political and community aspects were not cultivated. The school could certainly not assume full responsibility for such a giant undertaking on its own but it did have a crucial role to play, particularly, although not exclusively, in clarifying the concepts.

The most recent curriculum document of the Italian school system - the 1985 elementary school reform - says the school is to "urge pupils to become aware of their own ideas and responsible for their own actions in line with clear and consistent behaviour criteria for conduct which reflect recognized values". This does not just mean the transmission of already

established notions but of a phenomenology and of an interpretation of moral life. "This means the teachers must stimulate the energy deep inside the child and foster productive reflection on the concrete experience of life and in particular, that concerning human relationships."

Within this framework, values are not immutable realities independent from conscience, nor are they simply viewpoints which are as changeable as moods. They are universal visions of which one gradually becomes aware, although not without uncertainty and anxiety, as one exercises one's freedom and examines the motives for one's actions. The text of the document is not purely conceptual but deals also with the wealth to be gained, but also the many difficulties in dominating one's existence in the part where it says, "[the school] must foster in the child the awareness of the value of consistency between ideal and its realization in one's personal actions."

This document, now law of the State, does not specify what this ideal is, because, according to the democratic constitution of a pluralistic state, each citizen pursues legitimately his own. The school as such does not pronounce itself on the ultimate issues of life which fall more within the jurisdiction of the family and the church. It limits itself to "penultimate" matters, that is, to that knowledge and to those values which meet with broad consensus and do not go beyond a certain limit, except to express respect for those who do, knowing

well that the deepest meaning of life, from which no one can escape, is outside its jurisdiction.

It is within its jurisdiction however, to educate pupils in behaviour consistent with clear and recognized principles - principles outlined in international declarations of the rights of man and of the child, and in the constitution, with particularly emphasis on international cooperation and commitment to safeguard the planetary ecosystem.

The paradigms of the sociology of young people

So far, this has been an extremely brief summary of the reference picture emerging from pedagogical post-war research.

Sociologists have been dedicating an increasing amount of research to the world of youth establishing interpretive categories which have led to interesting aspects of the different youth cohorts which have succeeded each other from the fifties to the eighties. After the short season of the "revolutionary class" of young people, the categories of *marginalization* (in some cases, self-marginalization), of *fragmentation* (the result of the loss of values common to the society), of cultural change (which in the long term means that young people pass from materialistic values to post-materialistic values), of the *dilation of opportunities* (which allows young people to be mobile and to adapt), of *struggle for identity* (which highlights dramatically the individual's demand for importance and sense, in a complex society).

Recently, these interpretive categories have become somewhat unsatisfactory and have led to attributing a label to

the "average young person" which told too much or too little about him, because not all the representations proposed by sociologists are compatible with one another, even though based on more or less the same material. There has been talk of the "dissolving" or gradual disappearance of the youth condition into the adult world which has to a great extent assimilated young people. This has necessitated research approaches centering on more circumscribed phenomena of youth (unemployment, farm work, industrial work, drug addiction, delinquency), since a *single youth condition* is too elusive. More refined research are needed to analyze the variables on which attitudes and behaviour of youth living in specific contexts and specific problematic situations depend.

The most recent studies however have gathered a remarkable amount of significant data which make it possible, among other things, to understand the principle orientations of young people towards social and civic values.

The values of young people and their attitude to life and society

The 1987 IARD survey substantially confirms the results of the 1983 survey with only slight differences. Family (82.9%), work (66.6%), friends (60.9%), leisure activities (44.2%), studies and cultural interests (32.2%), sports (31.9%), social commitment (17.9%), religious commitment (12.4%), political activity (2.8%) are the important things in life in that order, according the results of these studies.

Quite apart from age, sex, and social extraction, the family is what counts the most for young Italians. 88% of the students from a sample in Siracusa have a lot of faith in the family and the same percentage of Tuscan students say they are very, or quite happy, with their families (only 1.8% feels uncomfortable) and think that their relationship with their parents is very, or quite good, that it is based on a feeling of collaboration (57.1%) and respect (32.7%) and that within the family circle they can speak frankly (78%) and that they can talk mainly of their future (66.6%).

83% of the young people in the 1987 IARD survey have a group of friends, made up of 5 or 10 people, who get together almost every day (33.1%) or three/four times a week (47%).

If they get on well with their families and with their friends, they also do not get on badly with people in general. 89.7% of the young Tuscans interviewed are very, or quite satisfied, with the relations they have with people, the majority (67.74%) of the Genoese students declared they welcomed newcomers with "enthusiasm, kindness and courtesy". 74.76% are very attracted by a society very different from their own. This indicates that on the whole young people accept the world and feel accepted in the world. These data redimension the youth *malaise* broadly purported to be a distinguishing feature of the youth condition. More than 80% of young people are satisfied with their standard of living, with the house they live in and the education they have received. Almost 70% are satisfied with the relationship

with their teachers, just under 50% are satisfied with how they live in Italy, while the type of life they lead at present is very, or quite satisfactory, for 78.8%.

As regards the future the majority think it is "self-determined" or "almost self-determined". 70% think it is important to have objectives and goals and 60.5% think success is a matter of working hard, and that luck plays an irrelevant role. Flexibility and inconsistency emerge immediately after that in that 65% think it is always better to keep many doors open. About one third are "fatalist" or "almost fatalist" and are therefore a disquietening problem.

As for their usual mood 50% of Tuscan students call it "serene, optimistic, confident"; 15.1%, "changing", 13.6%, "tormented" and 6.5% "pessimistic". As concerns morals, "young Italians seem well integrated in the moral code of the society, even if they perceive themselves as more tolerant" (IARD). In the last few years, a trend towards a more rigorous attitude towards homosexuality and drugs has been noticed, possibility related directly to the fear of AIDS.

Work-related problems

The most recent surveys reverse the picture of young people who work little and have little appreciation for work. According the 1987 IARD survey work comes immediately after the family in the classification of essential elements in life (96.4%).

a) Work in the life and minds of young people. As regards the structural aspects, in a sample in which 63% were not working at

the time and 37% were working, there is a clear tendency to begin to work as early as 15 years of age. It is not a matter of odd jobs or temporary work in the majority of cases, but a real occupation in terms of time, continuity and duration. 70% of those working held a stable job usually as worker or clerk, in the great majority of cases in a private firm, in return for a fairly low wages.

If we consider subjective experience and the evaluations in this strategic area in life, surprisingly perhaps, three quarters declare they are very, or quite satisfied, with the work they do. Seven tenths do not attempt to improve their working situation, even if it is not optimal; two thirds say they have enough free time, 59% would be willing to relinquish some of it in exchange for higher pay and 80% would be ready to earn less in exchange for training which would lead to a strengthening of their own skills and the acquisition of new skills or professionalism. Only 23.8% said they were unwilling to move to another town to enhance their working position while 45.3% would undertake to move permanently, even to another European country.

The majority prefer a wage-earning occupation (56.9%) but would rather work in a large corporation, preferably public, than in a small firm. They think that youth *unemployment* is the result of technological progress and the structural conditions of the Italian economy more than of fault of the government which has not known how to deal with the problem seriously. In examining the values related to work activities, two chief models

emerge. One is of an instrumental type which puts income and security in first place and the other is expressive placing emphasis on the possibility of doing interesting work in which you learn new things and have good relationships with fellow workers. The majority of the 1987 IARD sample opted for the first model; girls and boys of middle or upper class extraction tend to chose the second model. The same tendency was noted in the Censis survey of students from Siracusa, showing young people are slightly closer to post-materialistic values than those in the IARD survey who emerge on the whole, rather poorly.

In conclusion, as Bucciarelli says, there is neither disaffection nor refusal to work but a pragmatic attitude in selection, characterized by both instrumental elements and personalistic elements; the image young people have of work is made up of both contractual and ethical elements, is not all-absorbing and is characterized by flexibility in adapting without dramatizing the unemployment problem possibly because they think, more or less mistakenly, that it is a problem which concerns others and that the friendship and family network of connections will eventually come up with an acceptable solution. As has been seen, numerous young people start looking while they are still at secondary school, creating embarrassing and complex situations both for themselves and for the school they attend.

b) The problematic alliance between school and firm. The majority of young people want a preparation which is of use in entering the working world: in the search for acceptable mediation between

general culture and professional culture, research in the eighties, moves laboriously forward - research which seeds a more pragmatic and more courageous approach to the integration of training and the productive processes.

Efforts are being made to overcome the misconception that there is total incommunicability between the school world and the productive world owing the difference in the logic underlying the two. A further misconception that the school has no specific features to be defended and that the world of production must necessarily prevail for the pervasive strength of its arguments in the face of which the school will have either to acquiesce or resign itself to a marginal, precarious and discredited position.

The recent proposal to grant scholastic independence which allow the school to operate on more or less the same lines as industry, could provide the mentality and the necessary force to establish fair contracts with the productive world, in both the public and private sectors which would penalize neither of the two parties. Italy is rich in this kind of experience but lacks the norms and support to underpin the school's bargaining power to free it from fear and traditional pretensions of being culturally superior which do nothing to enhance their respective potentials.

In Minnesota a state office was set up for the sole purpose of facilitating the meeting of school and industry and ensuring that the meeting was useful and fruitful for both parties. The firms involved are granted tax benefits, an enhanced

image, better training for future workers, direct knowledge of the "school market", the development of a civic sense in young people as well as in their own personnel who are exposed to an educational logic, and the opportunity to recruit young people during the course of studies.

There are advantages for school as well: funds, equipment, material supplementary human resources, the professional and occupational enrichment of the students and of the teachers and company directors as well.

Industry becomes aware of the limits of production and the school realizes its educational limits. The meeting does entail relinquishing one's own interests but knowing how to benefit from institutions which are complementary to one's very nature and function.

Disaffection for politics

Researchers agree in pointing out that the real "black hole" in the life of youth today is the lack of interest in politics and in political militancy. Those who consider themselves politically engaged have dropped from 3.2% to 2.3% in the last four years. 15.8% say they are disgusted with politics, while only 32.7% think that the individual citizen can influence the decisions of those who govern them.

Faith in institutions has increased, especially faith in those which in 1968 represented the "system" - the hated tyrant. Among the institutional figures who inspire the most trust are the police, then teachers, banks, magistrates, priests and the

government in that order, with trade union leaders and politicians pulling up in the rear of the classification. That this corresponds to a very heart-felt exigency is demonstrated by the fact that in the scale of priorities, "the maintenance of order in the nation" is seen as coming before the defense of freedom of speech and immediately after the struggle against unemployment.

This need for *order* is confirmed by a survey conducted on a sample of Genoese students of whom only 46.25% are unambiguously against the death penalty - believing that it is neither useful nor just - while 18.3% think it is useful and just; only 74.44% refuse categorically torture.

For 75.5% of these young people, violations of human rights are inevitable; they (90.85%) believe nevertheless that the international community should intervene to enforce respect of these rights. As a means to attain this end, only 5.4% think military force should be employed; 50% talk of persuasion and the others of economic or political sanctions.

In reference to how to curb the episodes of vandalism which occur in cities (of which young people are often guilty), almost 40% think that education from the time of infancy is the remedy needed, 15.8% would propose sensitizing public opinion to be more vigilant, while 22.5% think the police should be strengthened and 21.6% favour stiffer punishment for those who commit acts of vandalism.

The *feeling of belonging* to a geographical unity is very clear. The first loyalty of this kind is to the place where

they live, then to Italy, and then to the world. Europe figures in a lower position than the region even if the answers to the specific question on whether it is important for Italy to be part of a *united Europe* could lead to different conclusions; 51.3% say it is very important, 39.6% say it is quite important and only 1.4% think it is not important. However, it is that kind of broad general consensus regarding the unification of Europe which is not enough to accelerate the politicians' slow pace. A patriotism resembling that of young Americans is non-existent, neither as regards Italy of today nor Europe of tomorrow.

Human rights and international justice

Racism, a disease deserving greater attention given the data regarding present and probable future migration, does not seem to attack young people if the Genoese sample, in which 91% gave a negative answer, is any indication. Only a little more than half however say they would intervene in a discussion to contest racism if it took place in their presence and more than 60% tend to see the more negative aspects of immigration to Italy, than the positive aspects.

Girls are decidedly more opposed to human rights violations and more optimistic than boys. This could be interpreted as a good sign as it seems that mothers are the people who have the most influence on the ideas of young Genoese.

The majority of young people declare they are very (28.5%), or quite (59.7%), interested in topics regarding development and North-South relations and they are fairly well

informed and well-oriented in this difficult area. They think the rights which should be guaranteed to everyone are the right to life, the right to work, to an education, to culture, to peace, to freedom of conscience and opinion, to health and to ownership, in that order. It is encouraging that education is in third place and that peace is perceived as a fundamental right.

There is almost unanimity on themes of international justice: 96.6% think it is right that every country help a country that is worse off and that the great gaps existing between different peoples should not be allowed to exist. 73% think nevertheless, that before helping a Third World country we should resolve our own problems since Italy is certainly not rich. However, there is no shortage of sensitivity or generosity, at least in word: 54.1% believe it is right to dedicate two/three weeks of one's holidays contributing concretely to some aid programme (work camp), in favour of the Third World. Only 7% takes a clearly negative stand against this suggestion, a result which should be food for thought. If this willingness exists how can it be put to practical use. Students show a certain amount of faith in school work which they do not conceive of as being purely informative. Education serves primarily to understand what causes social injustice (54.5%) and secondly to place oneself at the service of others and put one in a position to give generously to those who need (43.8%) and thirdly, to come to appreciate one's own privileged position (37.1%).

The activities of young people and the problem of acting in
accordance with one's ideas

Apart from opinions and attitudes, if participation in activities and membership in associations or groups in the last three months is considered, the most frequent type is the practice of sports (45.6%) followed by the activities of religious organizations (27.3%), team support activities (18.8%), student organization activities (14.3%), or cultural association activities (11.1%), activities involving social commitment or assistance (6.3%) with political activities placing last (4.1%).

If we examine the topics of debates or activities in which the interviewees have participated in the last 12 months, we find that school and student problems (30.4%) come first, followed by peace and disarmament issues (19.8%), protection of the environment (10%), the problems of workers (8.5%), women's problems (3.2%), electoral campaigns (2.9%) and problems of the city district (2.8%). Some researchers consider these data very encouraging: if young people are becoming more and more detached from politics and the institutions, social and pre-political areas are attracting increasing interest. This is probably a manifestation of consistency on the part of the young people in face of the complexity of a political world ever more indecipherable and increasingly incapable of resolving the problems which interest people. Proof of this is the mushrooming of volunteer work, social services offered freely which the

Bolognese school places in the "social private" sector, a third pole between the state and the market.

Other researchers, without denying the significance of minority phenomena, are less optimistic. The 1986 Censis report, *Rapporto sulla situazione sociale del Paese*, says: "Young people seem to reflect the world of adults, being substantially in agreement in placing collective values (peace, social justice, solidarity, friendship, love) before those of personal success (earning a lot of money, leading a easy life, acquiring prestige in one's job). However, their behaviour indicates that inspite of what they say the real order of priorities is reversed. The inconsistency between declarations and actual behaviour is a common characteristic of youth.

The 1986 EURISKO survey, *Indagine sociale italiana*, points out that the majority is made up of members of religious orders, democrats attached to their families and to their children, ecologists and people who lead a contemplative life. However, agnostic, politically uncommitted, abortionist, polluter, consumption-oriented behaviours are rising. Consistency and commitment to an overall rational way of life are attitudes costing too much for the individual who has become more independent but also more alone in facing a situation in which rule are progressively losing ethical clarity and concrete applicability.

Conformity to widely accepted values and pragmatic individualism in behaviour seem to be the most disturbing

characteristics of a culture which seems inadequate for coping with the challenges of the next millenium despite the great vitality and the firmly established democratic faith which have paved the way to Italy's entry into the circle of the most develeoped nations of the globe.

This ability to survive by flying low in the "day-to-day" and to achieve excellence in certain spheres thanks to a very highly qualified minority, has been found in the most recent generation of young people, defined by a sociologist as the "daily-life generation".

Ethical-religious and sapiential references which stress the project rather than experience, action rather than relation, results rather than the actors, have disappeared or dwindled or weakened. Can the social, civic values emerging in recent research last long, one might ask, if the ethical foundation on one hand and the *political consequences* of sociality, on the other, begin to crumble? And one might ask too, if a civic sense can be preserved and grow without some form of patriotism which gives vitality to norms or makes the constraints they impose bearable, in the name of belonging to an important social entity and in the conviction that one's own action can bring about some change.

At this point the ball lands back in the educational court. As we have seen there is no dearth of theoretical and legislative bases in the school. Besides the new programme of the elementary school (1985), which deals explicitly with

consistency, and the new programme of the intermediate school (1979) which makes reference to a "school which is placed in the world context" and to real practice in democracy within the school, the Presidential Decree of 1958 instituted the teaching of civic education in high schools and the so-called "decreti delegati" of 1974 (regulations delegating power to a series of scholastic organisms) radically changed the profile of the Italian school system which was to become based on new criteria of freedom and participation, in the transmission and interpretation of culture.

In the world outside the school experiences there are possibilities for, and examples of, living testimonies of great openness and courage so that significant points of reference do exist both in the realm of experiences and of theory.

Here too, the things are not totally clear, both because the intentions, the commitment, and professionalism itself are not sufficient to resolve the problems mentioned and because the educators' perception of young people is often distorted. Pedagogically oriented research is now beginning to shed light on this matter.

Distortion in the perception of educators

Here we deal not so much with the young person himself, whom sociologists endeavour to present objectively, as with the young person as he is "represented" or "treated" by educators in the school organizations and milieus which are involved with him. A research project conducted by the Institute of Pedagogy at the

University of Milan pinpoints an "accentuated inconsistency" between a generic "confused and self-projecting perception of the adolescent as a person in need of educational treatment and care on one hand, and ways of dealing with him/her as simply an object to instruct or help or keep busy or "train" sectorially on the basis of highly ideological models. By doing this the subjectivity of the adolescent and the conflict characterizing adolescence are disregarded both as a subject to be understood with the help of specific epistemological models and as an object to "treat" employing methodological devices which need to be honed to fit this purpose. Therefore the examination of adolescence is shifted from the adult, from society and from its institutions, to focus exclusively on the peer group as the ultimate outcome of anarchical and pubertal anti-pedantry. The adult is as absent here as he is omnipresent in the school and in the family."

According the survey, the school does not consider adolescence a subject to focus on, nor does it consider adolescents the users of its service. It talks of students and not of "adolescents". Teaching goals seem diametrically opposed to general training objectives. The self-definition of teachers makes it quite clear that they consider themselves disciplinary experts and not educators.

As can be seen, these data quite alter the theory underlying social pedagogy which considers the different "formal objects", assumed by different disciplines and different educational agencies to require interdisciplinary integration in

reference to a reality made up of those young people which the entire educational system is intent on educating.

In our case specialization could be what prevents knowledge of the reality and what hinders "treatment" addressed to the whole person and not limited to some of his empirical characteristics. That "dissolving" of the youth condition, noted by sociologists as the traits distinguishing young people from adults began to disappear, occurs to a certain extent in educational practice as well, in the sense that it is not possible to see beyond the horizon of one's own discipline and one's skills in that sector.

Special efforts are required to grasp adolescent reality correctly and then lay the basis for the division of the work of investigation among the various disciplines and the division of the educational task among the various "agencies" or institutions. This goes beyond the narrow confines of a discipline or an institution and is what would be required if common attitudes and ways of thinking are to be devised to work out a valid and broadly accepted snapshot of young people. This is the only way to deal with the particular and the specialized without losing sight of the whole. The motivation propelling this endeavour could come from the frustration of not knowing and frustration with relations and with the results experienced by the various people dealing in one way or another with young people.

The expectations, only partly fulfilled, of the international year of youth (1985)

The recent international youth year (1985) did not meet expectations but some progress was certainly made in the sectors of research and public engagement.

In this sector, a number of occurrences which have kindled hope and which need further support and encouragement are worth mentioning. First of all, the Office of the Prime Minister set up a national council for the problems of minors in collaboration with the State, the regions, local governments, youth associations and volunteer organizations, to help draft a "child and youth" policy. A working group at the national level but in collaboration with the same bodies, was also established to study how to prevent youth malaise.

The recently constituted Ministry for the Family and for Social Affairs is presently examining how to enhance the world of youth and how to help young people within the framework of a modern conception of assistance.

The Ministry of Education has proposed that all schools conduct research and hold a debate on the subjects of health, development and participation. This initiative is aimed at particularly important issues and is in the hands an organizational network of teachers attached to the local school boards who, initiating with a anti-drug campaign, have prepared a programme of health education, and development and participation education as the expression of well-being and the natural outcome

of the joy of life and moral commitment. This initiative has mobilized student councils and parent and teacher councils within schools which have sent student representatives to Rome to the Ministry and to the President of the Republic to present their interesting package of proposals. So far however, the validity of this endeavour has not been sufficiently recognized and the last two years have seen no follow-up.

Local governments are involved in various youth problems. Some have youth consulting bodies, others have youth departments and still others hold congresses and conduct research or show their sensitivity to youth problems by offering special facilities or organizing cultural programmes (sometimes termed "ephemeral") or activities (workshops, laboratories, summer camps), setting up treatment centres (communities for drug addicts), providing occupations assistance (information and job orientation bureaux, occupational training, funds for special activities), sponsoring sports activities (providing facilities, organization, promotion of association membership and various forms of financial assistance and conventions), acting on the housing problem (assigning plots, providing loans, aid to housing cooperatives, contributions) and directly financing the most representative youth associations.

There are different types of action and there has been an evolution from the more or less antagonistic model of 1968 to youth models incorporating a search for integration and communication. This type of youth support action is expanding and

becoming consolidated as consciousness of the strategic importance of young people grows. Paradoxically, this is happening at a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult in certain instances, to identify who they are, that is what it is that is peculiar to youth as compared to the adult population.

Public institutions are gradually understanding that it is not their job to act as a substitute for the "vital institutions" (families, groups, associations, public opinion) but to be atuned to the spirit of the community and their needs and facilitate and promote the full expression of these institutions in an intelligent way.

Youth groups and associations, whether of a non-confessional or Catholic type, need to be promoted, strengthened and assisted as they are the "containers" permitting learning and experience for youth, although not all tasks should be delegated to them. *Youth associations*, in particular those which provide volunteer services, offer a wealth to be gained in the development of ideals, and in the field of ethical, affective and organizational experience, not only in allowing for the expression of convictions but making important contributions in the learning of methods which the school would be well-advised to take advantage of.

The *family* is the "institution" which young people appreciate the most; they even tend to linger too long within its protective enclosure, postponing the completion of their studies and marriage, continuing to enjoy the support of their parents

while they experiment in the affective and working fields. The relatively low conflict within the family and the willingness to dialogue, shown by both parents and children (as we have seen, the topic of conversation at home is often the future of the children), makes the home a particularly comfortable place for reflection on personal and social values.

A research study on peace at the national level revealed the frequency with which this subject is discussed in family conversations and how it is positively linked to the outside commitments of both parents and children. According to the study mothers who have more education, even if they are not employed in a highly qualified job, are more sensitive to a commitment to peace. The study also confirmed that mothers have a central role inasmuch as they are ready and willing to discuss subjects crucial to the life of their children. This openness is positively linked to the personal and social commitment of parents and children. As has been seen, young Genoese maintain that first their mothers and then their fathers, have had the greatest influence on the formation of their ideas. The school ranks only third in this classification.

It is significant that AGE, the national parents association, has recently drawn up a "Proposal for an ethical behaviour pact common to parents, teachers and those involved in activities influencing the education and development of young people". The good relations existing between AGE, a Catholic-inspired organization, and CGD, a non-confessional democratic

parents coordination [committee] which has also met with the recently set up EPA (European Parents Association) is quite significant. With differences in ways and tone, similar basic agreement exists between the Catholic (AIMC and UCIIM) and the non-confessional (CIDI and FNISM) teachers' associations, which maintain that professional requalification is necessary and that the school should be open and receptive to the vital requests of society.

On the whole, the impression is that the battle will be long and the outcome hardly predictable. There exist however the awareness and the energy needed to face it, and this must be done marching side by side with young people, and not without them, and not against them.

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